



# Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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Volume 28 | Number 1

Article 2

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January 2008

## Institute Supports Graduates and Undergraduates

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### Recommended Citation

(2008) "Institute Supports Graduates and Undergraduates," *Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship*: Vol. 28: No. 1, Article 2.

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# INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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2008

## New Series Launched with Book on DNA Research


In the last few years, the topic of how DNA research fits in with the text of the Book of Mormon has become increasingly divisive. On the one hand, critics of the Church seize on recent DNA studies to claim that Native Americans are descended from Asian, not Middle Eastern, ancestors. On the other hand, faithful LDS scholars, including some of the most respected DNA researchers in the country, say the data from recent research is insufficient to deny or confirm the claims of the Book of Mormon.

The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship has published several articles dealing with DNA and the Book of Mormon in its *FARMS Review* and *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. Now, for the first time, all of these articles will be available in one volume, entitled *The Book of Mormon and DNA Research*.

Edited by Daniel C. Peterson, *The Book of Mormon and DNA Research* is the first volume in a new series, The Best of the Maxwell Institute. This series will publish collections of articles on persis-

tently important themes. *The Book of Mormon and DNA Research* will appear this summer and other volumes will follow periodically.

This new publication includes contributions by Book of Mormon scholars John L. Sorenson and Matthew Roper, who address the complex cultural, historical, and theological questions surrounding the Book of Mormon text. John M. Butler, the lead scientist in developing DNA tests used in identifying the victims of the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, discusses the difficulties with conducting ancestry studies, especially on ancient populations.

Other contributors include Michael F. Whiting, a BYU professor of biology; David A. McClellan, a geneticist; D. Jeffrey Meldrum and Trent D. Stephens, biologists; Brian Stubbs, who studies population dynamics; and David G. Stewart Jr., a medical doctor. The studies offer different perspectives on how to deal with the DNA questions surrounding the Book of Mormon. However, many of the authors also emphasize that the authenticity of the Book of Mormon lies in the realm of faith, not science. 

## Institute Supports Graduates and Undergraduates

The Maxwell Institute continues to encourage and support the work of graduate and undergraduate students through two funds.

### Nibley Fellowship Program

Each year at this time we remind graduate students about the Nibley Fellowship Program and its application deadline. Named in honor of the late eminent Latter-day Saint scholar Hugh Nibley, this program provides financial aid to students enrolled in accredited PhD programs in areas of study directly related to the work and mission of the Maxwell Institute, particularly work done under the auspices of one department of the Institute, the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, such as studies of the Book of Mormon, the Book of

Abraham, the Old and New Testaments, early Christianity, ancient temples, and related subjects. Applicants cannot be employed at the Maxwell Institute or be related to an Institute employee.

Those interested in applying for the first time or who wish to renew their fellowships for the 2008–2009 academic year should know that the deadline for submitting a completed application form and all supporting documentation is **August 31, 2008**. Guidelines and an application form are available by downloading from [maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/nibleyfellowships](http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/nibleyfellowships) or by e-mailing [nibleyfellowships@byu.edu](mailto:nibleyfellowships@byu.edu).

The Maxwell Institute awarded Nibley Fellowships to the following graduate students for the 2007–2008 academic year:

Continuing Nibley Fellows are **Jared William Anderson**, history of the Bible, Department of

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FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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## Institute Supports Students

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Religious Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; **Lincoln H. Blumell**, early Christianity, Department and Centre for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto; **Matthew Bowen**, biblical studies, Department of Theological and Religious Studies, Catholic University of America; **Matthew J. Grey**, ancient Mediterranean religions, Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; **Paul Derek Miller**, theology, ethics and culture, School of Religion, Claremont Graduate University; **Brent James Schmidt**, Greek, New Testament, early Christianity, Department of Classics, University of Colorado, Boulder; **Shirley (Shirl) Irene Wood**, biblical interpretation, Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver; **Mark Alan Wright**, Mesoamerican archaeology, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside; **John D. Young**, religious and cultural history, medieval studies, University of Notre Dame.

First-time Nibley Fellows are **Ron R. Rainey**, New Testament, Department of Religion, Duke University; **Jacob Rennaker**, comparative religion, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington; **Daniel B. Sharp**, New Testament, Claremont Graduate University.

### Russel B. Swensen Endowed Mentorship Fund

The Russel B. Swensen Endowed Mentorship Fund was created as a result of a generous gift from Robert (Bob) Gay in honor of his father William (Bill) Gay. Named in recognition of a beloved BYU professor, this fund was created to provide grants to selected undergraduate students each year who are pursuing degrees in fields of study related to the Maxwell Institute's broad areas of interest and who have secured an agreement to conduct research under the supervision of a BYU faculty member.

The Maxwell Institute awarded Swensen mentorships to two Brigham Young University undergraduate students for 2007–2008. **David Nielsen** is conducting research on "Canonical vs. Apocryphal Scribal Habits." His faculty mentor is Professor Thomas Wayment of the Department of Ancient Scripture. **Jonathan Harmon** is focusing on "Hebrews and Luke," with Professor Eric D. Huntsman of the Department of Ancient Scripture as his mentor.

Swensen Mentorship grants are administered by BYU's Office of Research and Creative Activities (ORCA). For information about student mentoring grants in general, please contact Nancy Davis in the ORCA office, A-285 ASB, 801-422-1461. For information about the Swensen Mentorship Fund or the Nibley Fellowship Program, contact M. Gerald Bradford at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, 200 WAIH, Provo, UT 84602 (telephone: 801-812-1329; e-mail: [bradfordmg@aol.com](mailto:bradfordmg@aol.com)). 

### Correction

In volume 27, issue 6 of *Insights* in the article about the *Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library*, we indicated that by special arrangement the Maxwell Institute distributes copies of the database on campus at little or no cost. This applies exclusively to those resident on the BYU campuses. All others should apply directly to Brill Academic Press. We apologize for the error.

# INSIGHTS

Paula W. Hicken, *Managing Editor*  
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A Publication of  
THE  
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The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship encourages and supports research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Bible, other ancient scripture, and related subjects. The Maxwell Institute publishes and distributes titles in these areas for the benefit of scholars and interested Latter-day Saint readers.

Primary research interests at the Maxwell Institute include the history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to ancient scripture. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of scripture, solid research and academic perspectives can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about scripture.

The Maxwell Institute makes reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer-reviewed to ensure that scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these materials are used to support further research and publications.

